



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2009-080

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Julie Magee, Hathaway Scholarship Consultant
Sean Moore, Hathaway Scholarship Consultant

DATE: May 15, 2009

SUBJECT: ACT Explore Test for 8th Grade Students

TIME SENSITIVE IMPORTANT: PLEASE SHARE

During the 2009 legislative session, the Wyoming Legislature allocated \$50,000.00 to pay for the administration of the ACT Explore test for all 8th Graders in Wyoming. This means that each district needs to plan on testing all 8th graders next year.

Explore provides baseline information on the academic abilities of eighth-grade students that can be used to help plan high school coursework. Additionally, the results of Explore test scores will give parents, students and counselors valuable insight into career planning.

Critical Information for
the 2009-10 Explore
Test:

Each test is thirty minutes in length totaling two hours of testing time. The Hathaway 8th Grade Unit of Study requires each district to provide students one week of instruction on the Hathaway Scholarship requirements and emphasizes detailed career planning.

The WDE worked with ACT, Inc. to set up a testing window from October 1, 2009 through October 30, 2009. During this month, schools can set their individual test dates for students as they see fit.

The WDE will provide a live WEN video workshop on June 8, 2009 from 10:45 AM -12:00 PM.* This workshop will address the legislation behind this test, a general overview of the test, and a Q & A session about test administration.

Data from the test should be available to schools by December 2009 or January 2010. Around this time, the WDE and ACT will provide several Interpretive Data Workshops to middle schools and junior

high schools. The workshops will be conducted in person and set at regional training sites. These workshops will help counselors incorporate the results of the Explore test into their counseling practices.

The Explore Test Measures:

English: The EXPLORE English Test measures students' understanding of standard written English—punctuation, grammar and usage, and sentence structure (Usage/Mechanics)—and their understanding of the use of strategy, organization, and style in writing (Rhetorical Skills).

Math: The EXPLORE Math Test measures students' mathematical reasoning ability. The test focuses on their ability to reason in math rather than how well they have memorized formulas or can perform computations.

Questions on this part of the test cover four areas—knowledge and skills, direct application, understanding concepts, and integrating understanding of concepts—in pre-algebra, elementary algebra, geometry, and statistics and probability.

Reading: The EXPLORE Reading Test measures students' ability to understand written material from different school subjects. The skills measured include referring to details in the passage, drawing conclusions, and making comparisons and generalizations. The test does not cover information outside the passages, vocabulary taken out of context, or formal logic.

Science: The EXPLORE Science Test measures students' scientific reasoning skills and their ability to understand scientific information and draw conclusions from it. Six sets of scientific information are presented in one of three formats: data representation (graphs, tables, and other forms), research summaries (descriptions of several related experiments), or conflicting viewpoints (two or more hypotheses that are inconsistent with one another).

Materials for this test are drawn from the life sciences, Earth/space sciences (e.g., geology, astronomy, and meteorology), and physical sciences. The test emphasizes students' scientific reasoning skills rather than how well they can recall scientific facts, or their skills in mathematics or in reading.

Connection to Hathaway: The WDE will recognize the administration of the ACT Explore Test as a component of the requirements associated with the 8th Grade Unit of Study (§21-16-1308 (b)(i)(C)).

*In order to access this live WEN video workshop, participants must contact the WEN coordinator in their districts well before the date of this training. Every high school has a WEN coordinator, as does every community college and UW, and they will set up the WEN site in your district so you can attend. This workshop is highly recommended for all 8th grade counselors; however, high school counselors are also welcome and encouraged to attend.

If you cannot attend the live WEN video workshop, it will be recorded and available online for 30 days after the live training takes place. To access this workshop online after June 8, 2009, please visit <http://tcs.video.k12.wy.us/> and look for the **ACT Explore Test Information Workshop**. Please keep the following in mind when trying to access this WEN video training online:

- 1) Users must be an administrator or have the ability to install ActiveX controls on their computer for viewing.
- 2) This training can be viewed on a computer at school, work or home.
- 3) The video may take a few minutes to synchronize.
- 4) At this time, there is no formal support for the streaming video player.

If you have any questions about this training or about the ACT Explore Test, please contact Julie Magee at jmagee@educ.state.wy.us or Sean Moore at smoore@educ.state.wy.us.

JM/SM/al

cc: 8th Grade Principals
8th Grade Counselors
High School Counselors
PAWS Coordinators